

FROM COCOAFARMS TO A TOWNSTATUS: THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF TONKERE-OLUWATEDO, 1934-2016¹

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Abstract

Settlements and towns, as social and political complexities among Yoruba indigenous people have received attentions from scholars. They also explained the peopling of many Yoruba towns, though in different categories and traditions of migration. The present study which is a contribution to the history and culture of Yoruba people discusses the social and political transformation of Tonkere-Oluwatedo from thirty-seven (37) cocoa farmsteads to a town. Using oral history the study explains that Tonkere-Oluwatedo is a product of Modakeke and Ile-Ife's social disturbances of the 19th and early part of the 20th century. Thus, the bulk of the population are from Ile-Ife but of Oyo stock that were looking for a place of refuge after their displacement by the Ife. They moved to their farmstead and through cooperation subdued social and economic challenge to emerge a fledgling town in 1934. The dynamism of their social and political system enhanced peaceful relations which has been responsible for social, economy and political development of the town including the people. The advent of Christianity and establishment of Churches in Tonkere was explained as a significant fillip to the transformation of Tonkere. The study therefore contributes to settlement culture among the Yoruba people of southwest Nigeria.

Keywords: Yoruba, transformation, identity, society and belief.

Introduction

Yoruba settlements have received scholarly attentions though, in different categories and traditions of migration from historians and sociologists since the 1940's. For instance, Biobaku's historical sketch of Egba traditional authorities² explained the foundation of Abeokuta by Sodeke in the early part of the 19th century. Oguntuyi's³ scholarly work on Ado- Ekiti explained the peopling of Ado initially by the Elesun dynasty and the Ewi Awomaro led group at a latter date from Ado-Bini until they took over the political control of the town. Adeboye Olufunke's⁴ work on Ibadan was epical, discussing the politics, social and

¹I will like to appreciate the support of Bishop Matthew Ademoyegun Osunade and Canon Ajadi of St James

Anglican Church, Tonkere, for their support in the process of this work in Tonkere. Chief OjoBankole, the

Bale of Akanle village in Osun State, and Mr Okunade Sole's contribution to the success of the work is also appreciated.

² Biobaku, S. 1952. A historical sketch of Egba traditional authorities, Africa, 22;1,

³ Oguntuyi, A.O. 1979. A short history of Ado Ekiti, Bamgboye press, Ado-Ekiti

⁴ Adeboye, O. A. 2003. City of Ibadan, in G.O. Oguntomisin (ed.), Yoruba Towns and Cities, Bookshelf

economic life of the Ibadan society, including the changes that have taken place therein. These scholars opined in their scholarly works the role of towns and human settlements as being that of a container and transmitter of culture. This paper therefore advance on their work to exhumes the resilience and commitment of Tonkere people to social and political development of their town from the time of its convergence in 1934 to 2016, which to the best of our knowledge had not been interrogated by scholars.

In the opinion of Adeboye, a town is supposed to be a melting pot, synthesising different 'cultures', but unlike what happens in Ibadan where the 'cultures' converge without integration, the people of Tonkere-Oluwatedo not minding their identity and diversity have come to maintain and sustain Tonkere identity; as will be pointed out later in the paper, it may be very difficult to differentiate the identity of each group tradition of origin. The paper discuss the advent of the peopling of Tonkere-Oluwatedo, and explained the advent of Christianity in relationship to the development and establishment of other Churches in Tonkere; issues of social and political development is also explained and it culminated to the discussion on political development and transformation of the town from bale to beaded kingship status in 2015.

Peopling of Tonkere-Oluwatedo

Tonkere-Oluwatedo is a rustic town located in a deep forest between Ile-fe and Ede, in the present Ayedade local government area of Osun State. This expanse of land was lying fallow on the eastern outpost as a boundary of the old Oyo Kingdom and Ile-Ife until it was occupied by the fleeing Oyo migrants in the latter part of the 19th century⁵. Its location encouraged farming but its reclusiveness hindered social and economic transactions for the better part of the 20th century. Tonkere (Oluwatedo) is located on a steep and undulating topography. Unlike several other Yoruba settlements that could trace their foundation and origin to Ile-Ife. Tonkere-Oluwatedo is a development occasioned by the disruptions of the Yoruba societies including Ile-Ife in the early 19th and 20th century. It emerged first, as a farmstead for some Oyo-Yoruba migrants dislodged by the Fulani wars from 1821⁶. Secondly, it became populated by the outcome of the disentanglement between Modakeke and Ile-Ife from 1835 to 1910, largely to the problem of resource control or land charges and thirdly, it became home to individuals running away from social hostilities which included chieftaincy problems and other social challenges that are life-threatening while others joined their friends and family to settle permanently in Tonkere-Oluwatedo.

Ibadan, Pp. 7-19.

⁵Chief OjoBankole, oral interview, Ode-omu; OjoBankole is presently the Bale of Akanle Village in Osun State.

He gave the information in Ode Omu. His grandfather was affected by the Fulani War of 1840 at Osogbo. The

Yoruba people refers to the war as 'Ogunwukuwuku' (+87) 03/05/2017

⁶Chief OjoBankole, noted that his father was among the first cocoa famers in Tonkere. They were coming to

Tonkere to farm from Ile-Ife where they initially settled until the Modakeke Ife war during the reign of Adenekan

Olubuse I in 1909.03/05/2017

Tonkere Oluwatedo, therefore, has more Oyo-Yoruba migrants from Modakeke than other sub-Yoruba in view of the fact that they are the major group in the first and second wave of settlement. The Oyo-Yoruba presence in Tonkere-Oluwatedo could be dated back to the second decades of the 19th century. Rev. Johnson had recorded that by the conquest of all the principal towns of Yoruba proper (i.e Oyo), by the Fulani, the people escaped to places like Moro, Ipetumodu, Edunabon, Yakoyo, Ifa-and, Sope, Waro, Oogi ..., Apomu and Ikire.⁷ He further explained that not long after they have settled down, in these towns, was the Lasinmirin war, called out by an Iwo Muslim cleric named Mohomi which further overran these towns such that they moved enmassed to Ile-Ife under *Ooni Abeweila gbagada gbagada*.⁸ Perhaps, it was due largely to the cultural influence of Ile-Ife over other Yoruba towns that made them look towards Ife as a place of refuge. Ile-Ife in the eyes of every Yoruba person is where the Yoruba world began. The Yoruba believed that they all emigrated from Ile-Ife. therefore, they were culturally attached to Ile-Ife, which they referred to as their *Orirun*. Moreso, the progenitor and founder of Oyo Kingdom, Oranmiyan left Ife to established Oyo, therefore returning to Ife was to them returning home⁹.

The cultural affiliation with Ile-Ife by the Yoruba generally must have propelled some section of the Oyo-Yoruba people to relocate to Ile-Ife after the destruction of Old Oyo, while the other group, which include the Alaafin, settled in Ago-Oja, now Oyo toward Ijaye and Ibadan on the southern part of Yorubaland¹⁰. The cultural affiliation may have also led to their initial acceptance by the Ile-Ife until the outbreak of hostilities in the mid-nineteenth century. Scholars have attributed the hostility to the problem of resource control (land-rent)¹¹. Evidence available reveals some families that had initially settled in Oogi, Edunabon, Yakoyo, Moro, and Ipetumodu had begun to farm on a freeland between Ede and Ile-Ife. They have cocoa plantations in the woodland which they visit from their settlements either in Oogi, Edunabon, Yakoyo, Moro, and Ipetumodu, including Ile-Ife to attend their farms in Tonkere-Oluwatedo. However, when the disagreement between Modakeke and Ile-Ife started in 1835 and later culminated in bloody battles of 1840, 1849/1850, and in 1882 and 1892¹². Several of the families affected migrated en mass to their farms which were safe and probably secure against invaders.

The Ile-Ife and Modakeke conflicts have been discussed at length by scholars with regard to ethnic crises in Nigeria. However, the enormity of the crises on the Modakeke and Ife people need to be explained here with regard to the movement of perceived Oyo migrants (Modakeke) from Ile-Ife to several other towns including Tonkere-Oluwatedo, and Ode-

⁷ Johnson S. 2009. History of the Yorubas. C.M.S. P272

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⁹I advanced this position on the premise of Yoruba commonwealth, drawn from the position of Professor

Akinjogbin's Ebi system of the Yoruba people

¹⁰AdegbiteAdewuyi. 2018. Issues in Ogbomoso History. Ogbomoso.

¹¹Ademiju M. A. 1995. The outward migration of Ife people to Isoya between 1840 and 1860. Chronicler,

Unilorin Journal of the Students Historical Society, Vol 11. Pp39-42

¹²Ademiju M. A. 1995. The outward migration of Ife people to Isoya between 1840 and 1860. Chronicler,

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Omu. For instance, the Ile-Ife and Modakeke crises depopulated Modakeke and Ile-Ife¹³. While, some of the people relocated to their farmland, where they continued to live permanently, others relocated to other Yoruba towns and villages around Ile-Ife, that seemed to be safer. Again, we must note that the Yoruba people are predominantly farmers, and in most cases, they have their farms far away from their towns where they live. In this way, Tonkere-Oluwatedo became a farmstead and a place of safety from the Modakeke-Ife war.

The polemic is that both the Modakeke and the Ife people have farmland outside Ile-Ife that accommodated them at crises periods. The above development partly explains Yoruba people's love for urban life, large settlements, and towns, social and political complexity. It may also explain the peopling of many Yoruba towns, though in different categories and traditions of migration. However, in the case of Tonkere, some Ile-Ife and Modakeke people running away from the crises moved to their farm on the forest (land) bordering Ede, Ile-Ife and the Ijesa country. These farmland thus becomes a kind of haven or refuge for these group during the crises period¹⁴. Oral interview from Tonkere-Oluwatedo reveals some individuals left Ile-Ife in the wake of the 1840¹⁵ crisis to their farm, while others left at a later date to settle in what later became Tonkere-Oluwatedo. This was in line with Akintoye's position that several Yoruba towns were products of farming activities, which has for a long time influenced Yoruba social and political developments¹⁶.

Furthermore, the emigration of people from Ile-Ife and Modakeke in the middle of the 19th Century as noted above was on the persistence of Oba Adenekan Olubuse I, the Ooni of Ife, around 1909 who insisted that the Modakeke must emigrate elsewhere for peace to reign in Ile-Ife¹⁷. Oba Adenekan Olubuse I was said to have consulted Ifa oracle on how to force the Modakeke out of the Ile-Ife territory and to end the incessant crises. The Ifa oracle was said to have specified a special sacrifice to force-out the Modakeke from Ile-Ife. The source affirms the sacrifice was undertaken by Oba Adenekan Olubuse I, himself, since, Ifa oracle has specified that whoever carried the sacrifice would not survive it. His unyielding and persistence on expelling the Modakeke made him took the sacrifice to the groove, and this led to his death in 1910 as predicted by the Ifa oracle. The aftermath was the mass emigration of the Modakeke people from Ile-Ife in 1909, in what is commonly referred to by the Modakeke people as "*iletu*" or "*ote Adenekan*", i.e. the conspiracy of Adenekan. The emigration culminated in the establishment of Odeomu in 1910 by the colonial authority, but before this

¹³Ademiju M. A. 1995.-----

¹⁴ Chief Bankole Ojo gave the information in Ode-omu. 03/03/2017

¹⁵Chief John Damade corroborated Akinjogbin's view on demographic changes in Yorubaland as it affects Ile-Ife and Tonkere after the 'wukuwuku' war. He noted how his grandfather initially settled in Oogi before they later moved to Tonkere. 03/03/207

¹⁶Akintoye, S. 1969. The Northeastern Yoruba Districts and Benin Kingdom. Journal of Historical Society of

Nigeria, Vol. 2, No. 4: 539-53

¹⁷Rev. Koyejo (90yrs). He gave the information at his residence in Ogbomoso, Oyo State. He was one of

the Ife elders and part of the Ife Historical Group saddled with the writing of Ile-Ife history. He worked

with Chief Fabunmi who wrote Ile-Ife Genesis of a race.

time, several other people have returned back to places like Edunabon, Gbongan, and Tonkere even before 1909.

The progenitors of Tonkere-Oluwatedo, we have noted migrated from different locations to farm in the forested belt, during which time, they also settled differently in their various farmsteads. They interacted socially as friends and relations being neighbours but were not politically united as a town or under a single political leader. Oral interviews reveal these groups comprised about thirty-seven farmsteads (*alabajaba*) from different towns including Oogi, Ijesa, Ile-Ife, Modakeke, Ekiti, and Ijebu to farm in the area. In other words, the reason for convergence at Tonkere-Oluwatedo was the search for security, economic opportunities, and comfort. The interview further reveals the decision to make the place their permanent home was due largely to the civil unrest within Yoruba society in the 19th century, particularly, the incessant Modakeke-Ile-Ife crises and the seeming difficulty to leave peaceably among the Ile-Ife people. Those who came from the Ijesa area explains they left for Tonkere due to chieftaincy disputes. Other groups that later joined claimed they accompanied their friends from places like Odeomu, Edunabon, and Yakoyo among others to farm in Tonkere-Oluwatedo.

We, therefore, suggest that the movement and settlement at Tonkere-Oluwatedo was forcefully at some instance and voluntary at the other end. For instance, those who came from Modakeke were running away from social hostilities or wars, political crisis and likely economic doldrums that characterized Ife-Modakeke societies at the time. Indeed, the crises were so tensed that Ile-Ife itself was deserted at some instances while the occupants ran to Isoya and other neighboring villages.

The above were the development which dovetailed into *ote Adenekan Olubuse I*, an episode in 1907 and 1909, such that the Modakeke people had to flee Ile-Ife in different directions in what the Modakeke people refers to as '*Ile-tu*' or *ote Adenekan* (Adenekan conspiracy). Each group that ran towards Tonkere-Oluwatedo, according to our informants was led by his father or brother to settle in their farms, most of which are located close to one another. What later became an advantage was the Shasha treams that offers relief for thirst and hunger. The closeness of the streams and other smaller rivers impacted the settlement. The closeness of the settlements must have influenced the various farm owners at various stages of the historical milestone, to relate with one another and also cooperate as neighbors on issues of security, economic, social and political development.

D. A, Adeniyi in his *Iwe itan Tonkere* explains the thirty-seven farmsteads formed a union which was meeting every twenty days until the introduction of Christianity which changed the meeting time to eight days, that is, every Sunday, probably after the church service. Mr. Akinleye was the first leader (*Giwa*) of the group, while Mr Fakeyede was made the deputy as *Balogun*. It was during one of the meetings in the house of Mr Akinleye that someone suggested that they consult Ifa oracle to find out where to establish a market for their farm produce. Oral interview, however, reveals two places were suggested as a possible location for the market namely "Papa" and the "Abinu" junction, but when "Ebofin", a popular Ifa priest was invited, the Oracle chose Papa, where *Egungun Femi* or Femi's masquerade had her groove at the time. The Oracle also instructed that 'some' sacrifice be made for the new market. It was recorded that certain Ojo-ale and Ogunwale bore the sacrifice to the groove

where it was buried. The sacrifice was to stop the Ife authority from coming to Tonkere to establish the market, probably still basking in the fear of the Ife people.

Oral interview reveals the trepidation of the people relating with Ife due to their experience and would preferred to go with Osogbo, Gbongan, Ayegunle (Odeomu) and were also relating with Ibadan. According to our informant, the Colonial Resident Officer in Ibadan had to intervene and was present when the market was being inaugurated. The market later brought the farmsteads together informally and Mr Akinleye being the leader also moved his house close to the market for supervision, control and proper monitoring being the tradition in Yoruba society. The market at inauguration was close to Ajimuda's farm such that people also called it *oko-Ajimuda*.

As a tradition, it was a taboo to rear pork (*elede*) and must honour masquerades within the market place. These may not be unconnected with the fact that, the market place was a masquerade groove before it was made the town's market. In 1934, all the thirty-seven (37) farmsteads agreed to come together as a new town under Chief Akinleye. Before this time however, his Balogun, Mr Fakeyede had relocated to Modakeke, leaving behind his children. The Balogun position thus became vacant. Mr Oni was made the Deputy Bale, but he was not the Balogun. The creation of the position of the deputy Bale was aimed at looking for a helping hand for the Bale in the administration of the town. The inauguration and installation was performed by Oba Omotosho of Odeomu including the elders of Tonkere in 1935. Each of the farms (Aba) that congregated to form the new settlement recognized Chief Akinleye as their leader (1934-1944). He was succeeded by eight bale until 2015, when the baleship status was upgraded to kingship status.

Scholars of Yoruba history have noted Yoruba people's love for urban life. In this same vein, one can explain the reason for the development of Tonkere-Oluwatedo town as that the love for social development and access to new life offered by Christinty and Western Education. This was central to series of movement or resettlements of several Yoruba towns in the early part of the 20th century. This was a period when the entire Yoruba was recovering from decades of wars which disrupted the demographic pattern of the Yoruba communities. The impact of the war were the events that unify the thirty-seven farmsteads under the leadership of Baale Akinleye who ruled between 1934 and 1944¹⁸. This was when all the farm settlements agreed to relocate to the present site as a town and under a single political leader and authority. Baale Akinleye reputed to have led the revolution became the first to move his aba Akinleye to settle permanently on the site known at that time as "Oja-papa", through which the name Tonkere-papa emerged. However, before that time, were missionary activities in Yoruba societies that could be dated back to the early part of 20th century. Interviews from Tonkere explained a co-ordinated missionary activities by the Anglican Church of Nigeria, which culminated in the establishment of the St James Anglican Church. Obviously, the history of Christianity in Tonkere-Oluwatedo is inseparable from that of the St James Anglican Church. Indeed, Tonkere-Oluwatedo life is tied in one way or the other to the Christian faith in a general and the Anglican Church in particular. It is therefore appropriate to examine the history of Christianity in Tonkere-Oluwatedo

¹⁸Oba Matthew Akintoye Aremu (+74yrs), oral interview, the Olutedo of Tonkere, 11/02/2017

Advent of Christianity in Tonkere-Oluwatedo

The name Tonkere-Oluwatedo, actually emerged first due to the location of the Anglican Church and secondly, out of the people's sheer love for Christianity. The meaning is simply where God settled. Christianity was introduced by those who migrated from Modakeke to Tonkere-Oluwatedo before 1907¹⁹. Oral information, reveals, this group use to move from one farmstead to the other to preach the gospel of Christ in an uncoordinated form until 1907 when the Anglican Church in Tonkere-Oluwatedo was established. Available evidence reveals that between 1907 and 1909, adherents of Christian faith from six different settlements (aba), namely aba-Olukotun, aba-Sare, aba-Olosun, aba-Joojo, aba-Eleso, and aba-Ologbin were rotating worshiping services in the locations²⁰. Members include Pa. John Babatunde Akinsola from Orioke (now Oke-Soosi), Pa. Samuel Opatade from Eleso, Pa. Abraham Aderopo and Pa. Ezekiel Ayandiran from Sare, Pa. Joseph Adesiyen from Olosun and Pa. Ezekiel Oyewale from aba-Joojo.

Pa. Joseph Ojo, Pa. Simeon Adeyefa, Pa. Jacob Olakisokun, Mama Emily Efunranti, Mama Hannah Ogunnike, and Mama Deborah Adesiyen were also members of the early Anglican Church movement²¹. But, in one of the worship services, a decision was taken to look for a permanent and befitting place of worship for the congregation, and the lot fell on Oja-papa (Tonkere-Oluwatedo). Pa. John Babatunde of Oke-soosi, therefore, released his house as a temporary location for the church and also a parcel of land for the church and vicarage. The first church in Tonkere-Oluwatedo was therefore built on the land with bamboo and leaves as it was the tradition then. The lectern and pew were also constructed with bamboo²². The roof was later replaced with corrugated iron sheets while the bamboo gave way for mud.

Pa Daniel Akinsola laid a very solid foundation for the St James Anglican Church. His commitment, dedication, and concern for and of members to the growth of the church physically and spiritually were unparalleled. His donation of a place of worship for the church became the tonic that spurred others to give maximum support for the work of God. Under his leadership, the church was transformed into a modern architectural edifice. Members would go as far as Osogbo and Ibadan to purchase materials, which they carried on their heads to Tonkere-Oluwatedo for the building of the church since there were no other means of transporting them²³. Pa. Daniel Akinsola was the leader of the church until 2nd July, 1911 when the Anglican Communion under the Odeomu archdeaconry appointed the first church worker, Mr. S. T. Oloyede, who only stayed for 18 months.

¹⁹Chief Adeyeba oral interview, Tonkere. (+70yrs), 11/02/2017

²⁰Chief Okunade Sole, oral interview, Tonkere, (+65yrs), 11/02/2017.

²¹ Anglican Church Mission, anniversary handbook, 2017

²²Bishop Ademoyegun Osunade (+77yrs). He explained that he started the elementary under the shed behind the church in 1951. 16/12/2016

²³Chief Okunade Sole explained that his father told him how they trekked from Ibadan to Tonkere to buy roofing sheets to roof the Anglican Church. His father later became the Bale of Tonkere. 18/12/2016

Between 1911 and 1958, about fifteen (15) church workers served in the St James Anglican Church, Tonkere-Oluwatedo²⁴. These include Mr. S. T. Oloyede, Mr. S. Adeyefa, Mr. D. A. Adeloye, Mr. T. A. Akinbami, Mr. J. A. Ajayi, Mr. E. A. Akande, Mr. S. O. Ipinmoroti and Mr. C. Ayo Ogunleye, and it was not until 1958, when a resident catechist Mr. J. A. Oyatoye was posted to Tonkere-Oluwatedo. These workers served under twelve priest and four Reverend Canon that includes Reverend T. A. Adedapo who conducted the first baptism service in 1922. Reverend A. A. Abodunrin, Reverend J. A. Adeagbo, Reverend, M. O. Akinyemi (now Most Reverend M. O. Akinyemi) Reverend, M. O. Olaniyan, Reverend, J. B. Ajayi, Reverend, J. O. Olaosebikan, Reverend, R. A. Akinjute, (now Venerable R. A. Akinjute) Reverend Canons, A. A. Adesina (now Venerable A. A. Adesina, retired), Reverend, F. S. Oni (now Venerable F.S. Oni), Late Canon J O. Afolabi, Canon L. O. Faniran and Canon Ajadi the incumbent vicar. It is pertinent to note that the Rt. Reverend I. G. A. Jadesinmi conducted the first confirmation service in 1970.

The St James Anglican Church, Tonkere-Oluwatedo has undergone several transformations, overcoming several challenges since its inception. Between 1988 and 1993, the first vicarage was transformed to the Children Church and Chapel by Reverend R. Ola Akinjute with a new vicarage designed for the church by Dr. James Adewale, now Venerable (Prof) Adewale Osunade. The church has been actively involved in the educational development of the town from inception. They pioneered primary school education by establishing the St James Primary School in 1907 though, the school was built within the church compound. Records have it that the Catechist of the church also doubled as the teacher in the school in an attempt to inculcate in the children the right moral lesson²⁵. Teachers were also employed by the church and paid between fifteen shillings and one pound, as salary from the Church purse. In fact, to meet their educational projection, members were levied one shilling monthly to enable the church meet its financial obligation to the school particularly, the payments of teacher's salary, including other developmental projects and programs of the church.

Furthermore, the leadership structure in the church has enabled the church to continually wax stronger and stronger. The Baba Ijo is in charge of the men affairs and the first person to be appointed was late Pa. Jacob Olakisokun, while the first Iya Ijo was late Madam Hannah Ogunnike in charge of women affairs. The immediate past Baba Ijo was Chief Joseph Olaleye Adeboye who passed on to glory in 1999. The church is blessed with members like James Afolabi, Amos Toyinbo, John Opalade, James Olaniran, Daniel Famakinde, Simeon Adeyefa, James Adebayo, Isaiah Akintunde, Ezekiel Oyewole, Daniel Adegbite, Abraham Amusan, Elijah Adeleke, and Bishop Adewole Adewole Osunade.

The influence of the Anglican Church on Tonkere-Oluwatedo led to the change of the name from Tonkere-Papa or Tonkere-Oja to Tonkere-Oluwatedo to reflect the profound faith in Christ Jesus. (Oluwatedo means where the Lord lives or settled) The Church land was

²⁴Church records reveal the people that served in the Church from 1911 to 1958. I want to appreciate

Canon Ajadi, who accommodated me in the Church house; he also supply the information about the

Anglican Church, Tonkere

²⁵Chief John Damade, oral interview, Ode- Omu, 3/4/2017, (+80yrs)

donated by the Ogbowola/Akinsola family of *Oke-Soosi*, who introduced Christian religion to Tonkere-Oluwatedo years before 1907.

Indeed, the relationship between the town and the church cannot be overemphasised because, the church have produced great and eminent personalities that have also midwived social development in the town from its inception, apart from being the first church in the town.

The Apostolic Church

The Apostolic Church, Tonkere-Oluwatedo-Oluwatedo started in 1932 in the living room of Elder S. Oyeniyi with less than ten members who came from different farmsteads²⁶. The church was been supported by the Apostolic Church, Modakeke. However, when the Church grew in number, Elder S. Oyeniyi gave out part of his land to build the Church, as the living room became too small for the congregation. The leadership of the church at this time includes Elders Akinwale, E. Adegbite, Abraham, Akintoye, Mr. Amos Oyekanmi, Mr. Adeyemi and Mr. Odelade among others. The first Church was built with mud and roof with leave (*Ewe-gbodogi*) as was the practice in that period²⁷. The need for a bigger and better place, coupled with the relocation of settlements in the late 1930s led to its present location at Oke-Ola.

Furthermore, as the Church grows, Mr. Odelade gave a portion of land to the church at Oke-ola where the church is presently located. The church was built and completed in 1950. At completion, Pastor Theophilus was transferred from Modakeke to minister the church from 1950. He was transferred in 1955, to another Church. From 1955 to 1966, the church had no permanent pastor of her own, though, ministers would visit every Sunday to coordinate the Apostolic services among other things. Between 1966 and 1979, the church was been administered by the church elders. These elders include Elder, Akinwale, Elder, E. Adegbite, Elder, Abraham, and Elder, Akintoye. The present pastor of the Church is Pastor E. O. Opeyemi. The congregation has continued to increase from less than ten persons in 1932 to about one hundred.

Christ Apostolic Church

The Christ Apostolic Church of Tonkere-Oluwatedo has a long history and relationship with the family of Mr. Olaniyan and Mr. Matthew Oyetunji. It started in the house of Mr. Olaniyan, where it recorded a tremendous growth before it was moved to *Idi-rogbo* on the land donated by Mr. Matthew Oyetunji with about twenty members sometime in 1950. In 1958, the *Idi-rogbo* Church was built and late Mr. Samuel Omilani became the Baba Ijo, while late Mrs. Maria Asande was made the Iya-Ijo. The leadership of the church presently includes David Olaniyan²⁸ (Baba Ijo), Mr. Alice Oyeboode (Iya Ijo), Mrs. Elizabeth Akinwale (Iya Adua) and Mrs. Jolaade (Asoju Ijo).

Social and Political Developments

Tonkere-Oluwatedo at the earlier stage of her life enjoyed the support of the ebullient leaders like Chief Gabriel Agboola Adesiyani and other eminent citizens of Tonkere-Oluwatedo.

²⁶MrOkunadeSole, oral interview, Ile Ife. 4/4/2018, (+65yrs)

²⁷Mr.Simeon Adeyefa, oral interview, Tonkere20/10/2017, (+70yrs).

²⁸Pa. David Olaniyan, oral Interview, Tonkere, (+70yrs).

Chief Adesiyan was part of the Local Government Administration in the early fifties under the Action Group (AG) headed by the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The party held sway in all Yoruba towns including Tonkere-Oluwatedo until the early part of 1960 when the party was challenged by differences in political ideology among its members. In Tonkere-Oluwatedo, AG stalwarts included Chief Osunade, the father of Bishop Adewole Osunade. Chief Osunade joined party politics due to his love for the town but had to quit politics when he discovered during the AG members campaign visit to Odeomu the evil of politicking. According to Bishop Osunade, the AG members went to Odeomu to find a way to winning elections but in the course of the discussion, the father realized that for them to win the election in Tonkere-Oluwatedo, they will have to kill some people, which was against Chief Osunade's philosophy or political ideology. He bluntly refused to support the idea and hence, bided party politics bye-bye. Chief G. A. Adesiyan and others, however, continued politicking. They however, initiated the construction of the Grade C customary court and town hall in 1955²⁹ with the assistance and support of the people (each person contributed £1;00 each as development levy).

In 1983, Chief Bola Ige laid the foundation of a health center to advance health care in the town but due to the December 1983 coup could not complete the project. The project was later completed by the Osun state government under Chief Olabisi Akande in 2002³⁰; a community high school was also opened by the St James Anglican Church in 1970. Adewole Osunade was the chairman of the board that facilitated the establishment of the school. The late Ambassador Arike Ayorinde and Senator Akinlabi were instrumental to the electrification of Tonkere-Oluwatedo in the early part of the year 2000. The electricity project was commissioned in 2005, including boreholes donated by the Osun State government in collaboration with the World Bank through community development programs.

Water scheme expansion programme of the Western Region was extended to Tonkere when Professor Adetoye Faniran (Adewole Osunade's teacher, supervisor and mentor) was the Commissioner for Works. Professor James Adewale Osunade (Jnr) also initiated the building of a town hall in 2014, also through the Community Development Program of Osun State, also the rehabilitation of the Akoda-Tokenkere road to link the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and the Ibadan express road.

Worthy of note is the activities of the social clubs and several other societies in the town. Since, the town, unlike other Yoruba settlements where the structure revolves around age grade, has age grade system, the social clubs and society were responsible for the social activities, while they also at various instances act as social institutions maintaining social functioning of Tonkere. The foremost society is the Tonkere Progressive Union established in 1993 under Pa. Laisi Odeyinka³¹. Others include, *Egbe Omo Tonkere*, an association of all sons' and daughters of Tonkere home and abroad³². Chief Adeleke Damade explained that the Egbe was formed when the elders of the town realised the need for a group that would speak for the development of the town, though at some stage the decision did not work due to disunity among the people. But in recent time, the people have come together as one

²⁹Bishop Matthew AdemoyegunOsunade, oral interview, Tonkere, 3/3/2017 (+77yrs)

³⁰Bishop Matthew AdemoyegunOsunade, Ibid.

³¹Mr Okunade Sole, oral interview, Tonkere, 4/3/2017. (+65yrs)

³²Chief Adeleke Damade, oral interview, Ode-omu, (+80yrs)

community under the *Egbe Omo Tonkere*³³(Tonkere United) initiated **Olasunkoye Ademola**. This comprises all the youths and the adults. The date the Egbe Omo Tonkere was formed could not be remembered except that **Olasunkoye Ademola** suggested its formation which was supported by others like Adewole Osunade and Prince Okunade Soledale among others. There were other social groups like the Tonkere Great Movement chaired by Sesan Oyedokun; Omowumi Social Club led by Chief William Dairo and Lovely Brothers and Sisters³⁴.

In addition, the economy of the town also brought several people together with the aim of assisting one another financially. This according to Mr. Wahab Adeleke has contributed to the development of Small Scale Industries in Tonkere. The farmers and the market women in the town organized themselves into various groups, either as a cooperative society or trading association. For instance, the produce buyers association which has been in existence since the 1960s was formed by members to help those who may need money for procurement hence, the name Egbe Basiri. It later became the Produce Association of Tonkere. The attempt to secure loans and provide other financial support for members led to the establishment of the Bashiri Cooperative Society. Moreover, the Ifelodun Cooperative Society, led by Mr. Adeleke Wahab and the Egbe Elero is presently chaired by Chief Oni Oguntoye. The Ifesowapo Social club, Egbe Olomi Tutu, Egbe Elekuro (Palm kernel), Egbe Elepo (Palm oil) and the Tonkere Cooperative Society has continued contributing to the promotion of the household economy of the emergent town.

In addition, the paradigm of chieftaincy and appointment in Tonkere-Oluwatedo is not hereditary; rather, it is premised on promotion and consensus. It, could thus, moves from an initial rank of *oloriebi* to culminate or end in the headship of the town as the Bale. This was the administrative strategy until March 13, 2013, when the Baale was elevated to the status of an Oba. In this way also, and depending on providence, any chieftain could rise to become the Oba of the town. Specifically, the *bale/oloriebi* must have risen and transverse other ranks to become the Balogun before becoming the Oba of Oluwatedo. The first Bale of Tonkere-Oluwatedo was Bale Akinleye (1934-1944). He was the *Oloriebi* of the Alagbaa family, a grouping of five (5) farm settlements namely, Abanla, Akinleye, Idi-ogun, and Oribu. We have noted that Bale Akinleye was the protagonist of a united Tonkere-Oluwatedo from the initially scattered farm settlements and avidly work towards its manifestation. This move subsequently, earned him the position of the founding Bale in 1934 by consensus. Bale Ogungbade Durowole took over from him in 1944 and reigned up till 1949³⁵. Ogungbade is from Alakan family. Amusan Igbintayo from Agbo-Ile Igbintayo was the third Bale and he ruled between 1949 and 1962. During this period, Bale Amusan Igbintayo became a member of the Egbedore traditional chieftaincy council in 1958.

Bale Amusan Igbintayo was succeeded by Bale Alalade David Babajide (1962-1964), from the Bangbade farm/house (Ile-Bangbade). Bale Okunade Elisha Ogungbade regime was very peaceful and witnessed a lot of developments. Bale Abraham Ige took over when the latter

³³Mr Okunade Sole, *ibid*

³⁴Mr. Okunade Sole, *ibid*.

³⁵Pamphlet on the coronation of Oba Matthew Oluwole Akintoye, the Olutedo of Tonkere, 21st March 2015.

joined his ancestors in 1989 and reigned until 1997. Chief Egunjimi Akande Jacob was installed in 1997 as the Bale of Tonkere. He only ruled for 3 years, (1997-2000). Chief Isabambi Yusuf Keyede's period was very brief. He was already an old man by the time he was made the Baale in 1997. He ruled between July 1997 and September 2000. Bale Matthew Oluwole Akintoye took over after his demise in 2000 and has remained the Oba of Tonkere-Oluwatedo till date.

Political Transformation - Bale to kingship Status

The nature of the Yoruba people and town administrative system has received scholarly attention by several scholars. Bolanle Awe's *Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power in the 19th Century*³⁶ explains the dynamism of Yoruba people in the traditional political system, particularly in Ibadan. Wale Oyemakinde commenting on the dynamism of the emerging political system of the 19th century wrote: "the system ultimately evolved its own brand of chieftaincy which was through the promotion of war leaders to state responsibilities"³⁷. This was not the case in Tonkere-Oluwatedo where the people brought dynamism into their political system, through which they promote a peaceful transition from one chieftaincy to the other apart from being responsible for the social and political development of the town. The new system, we must note has been able to reduce political tensions that are common to most Yoruba settlements where constitutional monarchism held sway, because, chieftaincy in the new towns were strictly by promotion, while those who earn it do so strictly on the basis of qualification.

In Tonkere-Oluwatedo, the chieftaincy principle was probably informed by the need to address chieftaincy crises, thus, lineage heads were given priority by promotion to the position of state responsibilities, such that issues of political contention were reduced. Even when it happened, like in 2013, the tradition became the principle for chieftaincy issue. For instance, at the death of Baale Yusuf on the 27th September 2010, the Tonkere-Oluwatedo community wrote to the chieftaincy committee of Oyo State via a letter dated 17th November 2011 requesting for the upgrading of the Balogun, Chief Olu Akintoye to the position of Bale of Tonkere-Oluwatedo. The letter was written through, his Royal Majesty, the Alayegun of Odeomu who has the consenting authority over Tonkere-Oluwatedo at the time, to the president of the Ayedaade Chieftaincy Committee for official pronouncement. This was sequel to a letter written on the 10 of July 2009, through the Alayegun of Odeomu to the President of the Ayedaade Local Government for the upgrading of their Baale to the position of an Oba. The July 10 letter and the demand therein were premised on the fact that "the Bale of Tonkere-Oluwatedo has been part of the Egbedore District Council Chieftaincy committee since 1966 and that either of their Balogun or the *Oosa* could assume the position of an Oba"³⁸. But the letter of 17th November 2011 was meant for the upgrading of the Balogun to the rank of Baale in line with the Tonkere-Oluwatedo chieftaincy declaration that was by convention.

³⁶ Awe B. *Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power in the 19th Century*

³⁷ Oyemakinde W. 1973. *The Impact of Nineteenth Century Warfare on Yoruba Traditional Chieftaincy*, Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol.9 No. 2, June

³⁸ Memorandum submitted to the Osun State government by the Tonkere Chieftaincy Committee for the selection/appointment of new Oba for Tonkere, pp 1-5

Journey to Beaded Crown Kingship Status

Beaded crown is the symbol of divine kingship in Yoruba society. It is the beaded crown that differentiates the Oba (king) from the Ijoye (chief). Due to its sacredness, only kings and priests believed to have relationship with the Yoruba ancestors are allowed to wear them. The crown (or ade) in recent past have become politicised, nevertheless, it remained the most important object in royal Yoruba regalia, and the right to wear it is limited to a small number of kings (obas) descended from royal families, particularly those who could trace their genesis to Oduduwa and Ile-Ife. Though, it is a sign of authority from the gods, emergent developments have enabled government to grant intending towns and their oba the privilege to wear beaded crowns without recourse to the tradition of tracing origin and relationship to Oduduwa and Ile-Ife, since the authority now rested on the government. Specifically, on July 10, 2009, the community made their first official request grant kings the power Permanent Secretary of the Osun State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs hinged on the historical antecedents of the town, as a member of the Egbedore District Chieftaincy Council that later became the Ayedaade Local Government³⁹. The letter was signed by Chief Egunjimi Jacob, who reigned before Yesufu Isabambi including;

1. Chief Yesufu Isabambi, Balogun of Tonkere
2. Chief Mrs Akinrinola Rabiato Otun Iyalode of Tonkere
3. Prince J. Ade Ojo, Community leader of Tonkere
4. Prince Ajiboye Y. Oyegunle
5. Chief Damade J. A. Bada of Tonkere
6. Chief Ogungbade
7. Chief William Dairo, Oosa of Tonkere
8. Chief OluAkintoye, Otun of Tonkere
9. Alhaji Aransi Akinola, Chief Imam of Tonkere

The letter was received by the Ayedaade Local Government via a reply dated 15th September 2009 and signed by the Chairman of Ayedaade Local Government with explanations that the letter had been forwarded to the Osun-State Council of Oba under the chairmanship of the Imperial Majesty, Oba OkunadeSijuade, Olubuse II, the Ooni of Ife for approval. However, Tonkere's desire to have Beaded Crown did not materialize until the Bale joined his ancestors in 2010. The death of Bale Yesufu Isabambi on September 27th, 2010 created the vacancy for the position of a new bale for the people of Tonkere-Oluwatedo (Bale Yesufu Isabambi from the family of Abinu family compound). He was succeeded by his Balogun, Chief Akintoye Matthew Oluwole from Alakinde family compound. Chief Akintoye Matthew Oluwole was the head of Alakinde family which qualifies him to become the Balogun and then the opportunity to succeed bale Yesufu Isabambi.

However, before his appointment as the new Bale of Tonkere, as a rule of Chieftaincy in Osun State, the community on November 17, 2010 wrote to the state government of Osun via the president of Ayedaade Local Government Chieftaincy Committee to inform the state of the demise of their bale and requesting for a new bale. They informed the state government of the order of appointment specifically mentioning Chief Olu Akintoye as the next bale. The letter was signed by 13 chiefs including;

³⁹Memorandum submitted to the Osun State government by the Tonkere Chieftaincy Committee, pp 1-5

Chief Titus Olusiyani, the Asipa of Tonkere
Chief Idowu Oyedokun, Ekarun of Tonkere
Chief Titus Olutayo, Ekerin of Tonkere
Chief Olatunji Ojo, Ekefa of Tonkere
Chief Mrs. Alimota Rabiātu, Otun Iyalode of Tonkere
Chief Mrs Akinrinola Rabiātu, Otun Iyalode of Tonkere
Chief Lawrence Ogunwole Odofin of Tonkere
Chief Oguntoye, Seriki of Tonkere
Chief Orosola, R. Abese of Tonkere
Chief Damade John, Bada of Tonkere
Chief AjiboyeYekeen, Asiwaju of Tonkere
AlhajiAransiAkinrinola, Chief Imam of Tonkere
Elder Lasisi Odeyinka, Community Leader of Tonkere

The Local Government Authority acceded to their request and in October 2010, the Balogun of Tonkere, Chief Matthew Oluwole Akintoye Aremu was elevated to become the 9th Bale of Tonkere Oluwatedo. His installation as the Bale was attended by all sons and daughters of the town and from far and near. With the installation, the chieftaincy committee recommenced the town's request for Beaded Crown from the State Government⁴⁰.

In separate letters dated July 2, 2012, and March 18, 2013, to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Osogbo, the committee made reference to their letter of July 10, 2009, and their wrongful inclusion in Ife North Local Government against the Peace Treaty of 4th June 1886 that was ratified on 23rd September 1886, ceding all lands, territories, towns, villages, and communities located or living after the Ishasa or Shasha River to Ayedaade⁴¹. They further noted that the Bale of Tonkere has been a recognize member of Egbedore/Ayedaade Local Government since September 1966 quoting the Nigeria Gazette No 58, Vol. 15 of September 1966 and WPLN 113, thus, validating their request for beaded oba. The people continued to put pressure on the government including political manoeuvrings.

The result and reward of their steadfastness and doggedness was realised through a letter from the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Osogbo, dated 30th July 2014 via ref; CD.174/Vol.II/608. The three-paragraph letter announced the Osun-state's approval with a heartfelt congratulation from the permanent secretary Mr. K. F. Oyebanji on the new status of their Oba. Subsequently, a coronation committee was set up to review activities that would lead to the proper coronation of the Oba. The committee was headed by Rev. Akala and it includes;

1. Mr. Odeyinka as Secretary
2. Chief Oyegunle Ajiboye
3. Prince Okunade Ogungbade Folasole
4. Honorable Rufus Oyedokun
5. Mr. Ojetayo Albert
6. Mr. Akintunde Adeolu

⁴⁰ Memorandum submitted to the Osun State government by the Tonkere Chieftaincy Committee, pp 1-5

⁴¹ Memorandum submitted to the Osun State government by the Tonkere Chieftaincy Committee, pp1-5

The Rt. Bishop Matthew Adewole Osunade was though, not a member, he was very active in the committee. He served as a mentor, motivating the committee with his presence at Gbogun, the approved venue of the committee meetings. The chairman of the committee Rev. Akala in his charismatic manner piloted the committee to a success; his committee members also displayed an uncommon loyalty, commitment and a high sense of responsibility to the community. In fact, all sons and daughters of Tonkere contributed in one way or the other to the coronation of their king. The people pooled their financial resources together for the success of the historic event, including Mr. Ojewole Rueben who provided materials for the documentation of Tonkere-Oluwatedo history.

The coronation was held as scheduled on March 21, 2015, with all the oba in Ayedaade Local Government Council in attendance. The Ogunsua of Modakeke, Oba Francis Adedoyin and the Olu of Sekona was present at the coronation⁴². Senator Akinlabi also graced the event. The coronation ceremony would have been incomplete without the grand final thanksgiving at the St James Anglican Church Tonkere. The significance of the Church in the history of Tonkere cannot be overemphasized. The church shared its history with the town which resulted in the prefix Oluwatedo that invariably became the title of the king of Tonkere. Tonkere is a place where God has the desire to settle. Chief Matthew Oluwale Akintoye Aremu became the first Olutedo of Tonkere and the first Oba to use a beaded crown in the Tonkere.

Conclusion

Tonkere unlike several Yoruba communities emerged from the ruins of Ife-Modakeke soured relationship in the early part of the 19th century. The paper noted Yoruba people's love for urban life as central to the peoples decision to unite under one leadership in 1934. In this same vein, one can explain the reason for the development of Tonkere-Oluwatedo town as the love for social development and access to new life offered by Christianity and Western Education. Tonkere-Oluwatedo enjoyed the support of the ebullient leaders including Chief Gabriel Agboola Adesiyon, Bishop (Prof.) Matthew Adewole Osunade and other eminent citizens of Tonkere-Oluwatedo who worked assiduously to uplift the town from Oja-papa to a modern town whose oba now wears a beaded crown. Infact, the traditional system ultimately evolved its own brand of chieftaincy which was through the promotion of clan heads and leaders to state responsibilities

The paper also discussed the contributions of several other community groups in the social and economic development of the town that has brought the people together and foster economic development of the people. Therefore, within the Tonkere society, small and medium scale entrepreneurs have continue to contributing to the promotion of the household economy of the emergent town.

⁴²Photographs from the palace album reveals some of the dignitaries that attended the coronation including Chief

Gabriel Agboola Adesiyon, Bishop (Prof.) Matthew Adewole Osunade